

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Wednesday, March 23, 1988/Chaitra 3,
1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[Translation]

SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI : I hope that today Shri Dandavate will keep his cool.

MR. SPEAKER: First, you provoke them and then expect them to keep their cool.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin

*406. PROF.K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received

representation from different organisations to include Christians of Scheduled Caste origins in the list of Scheduled Castes; and

(b) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAL) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) according to para 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 amended upto date, no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu or the Sikh religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste.' In view of this, persons professing christianity cannot be recognised as Scheduled Castes.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, the founding father of the Constitution decided to give economic concessions and privileges to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and backward communities because these people were economically and socially backward for a very long period. I would like to say whether these Scheduled Caste persons belonged to any religion or community were not considered at all. Now, a peculiar situation has arisen. A christian or a muslim scheduled caste person is not given the economic privileges that is being given to a Hindu or Sikh Scheduled Caste person. Another anomaly is that a Christian or a Muslim Scheduled Castes person, who is denied the privilege of Scheduled Caste, when he changes his faith to Hinduism or Sikhism, again this privilege is restored. I

think that this is natural injustice. I would like to know whether the Government would reconsider the point and amend the Constitution so that Christian and Muslim Scheduled Caste persons are given the concessions and privileges of the Scheduled Castes.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: It is very clearly stated in the constitution and according to that we do not accept this.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, in 1950 when the Amendment was made regarding Scheduled Castes, certain apprehensions were raised by the minority community. Sir, with your permission I would like to read out a few lines of the letter written from the Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: No, it is not allowed.

PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Sir, Panditji gave an assurance to this effect and according to the Constitution amendment of 1950, it was just to protect the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes seats in Parliament and State Legislatures. It has nothing to do with other economic concessions given to the Scheduled Castes belonging to Christian or Muslim communities. Now, I want to know whether the government will look into this assurance given by Panditji.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: Sir, untouchability is observed only in Hindus, not in Christians or Muslims. So, the question does not arise.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, at present one Scheduled Tribes community or Scheduled Caste community recognised in one State.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: There is no untouchability in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: No, I am not talking of or asking about untouchability. That is a separate question.

One Scheduled Tribes community or Scheduled Caste community is recognised in one State as Scheduled Tribes or Scheduled Caste community. But in another State, that particular community is not recognised as such. For example, the tribals of Chotanagpur have shifted from Chotanagpur to Assam to work in the tea gardens. They are recognised as Scheduled Tribes in Bihar, in Chotanagpur, but they are not recognised as Scheduled Tribe in Assam. We have sent several representations for their recognition as Scheduled Tribes, I mean, those who shifted from Chotanagpur and settled in Assam, as Scheduled Tribes. I would like to know whether the Government will consider them also and give recognition to those who settled in Assam as as Scheduled Tribes.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: Sir, this is in the State List and each State has got its lists of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, especially Scheduled Castes. And one State has got one type of Scheduled Castes, but that type of Scheduled Castes may not be recognised in other States. Like that one tribe, as the hon. Member has just now said that in Chotanagpur some Tribes are recognised as Scheduled Tribes.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: They have shifted to Assam.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: Yes, I know they have shifted to Assam tea gardens, they are not recognised there. The Assam Government has recognised them as OBC, i.e. Other Backward Classes, and they are receiving all sorts of concessions and that OBC....

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: They have to be recognised as Scheduled Tribes there.

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: they have not recognised them as Scheduled Tribe. A representation is made to the Ministry and we are considering that, but it is a State subject.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Sir, whatever may be the stand taken by the Fathers of our Constitution, the Government subsequently has brought so many amendments to the Constitution and Sir, practically there is no difference in educational social and economic conditions of Harijan Christians as well as Harijans.

MR. SPEAKER: Harijan Hindus.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: Harijans Hindus In the same family some-times a brother may take christianity, but that does not mean that he is advanced in all aspects. So, keeping in view the realities in the present conditions in the good olden days when the British were ruling, the situation may be different because they might have extended some educational and medical facilities to untouchables in those days, but now after 40 years, the situation of the Harijan Christians is in no way different from Harijan Hindus and in view of this fact, will the Government make a suitable amendment? Also in some States the washermen community is treated as a Scheduled Caste community. In Andhra Pradesh it is not treated as a Scheduled Caste community and the Andhra Pradesh Assembly has passed a Resolution and the Government has recommended to the Union government for inclusion of washermen in Andhra Pradesh in the list of Scheduled Castes. If so, what action the Government will take and by what date the Government will come forward with necessary amendments to the

Constitution?

DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI: Sir, it is true that converted Christians are also poor, but they come under the general category and so, under the 20-point programme they are taking benefit of that. The 20-point programme is not only for one class, it is for all the people who are below the poverty line. So, under that, either Muslims or Hindus or Christians everybody is benefited.. (Interruptions). They cannot be treated as SCs when they change to Christianity or Islam. They will not get that privilege. They will get the benefit under the 20 Point Programme. All the programmes which are there the poverty alleviation programme will take care of them.

The second part of the question of the hon. Member is about the recognition of the washermen community in Andhra Pradesh and in other places. That is under consideration of the Government. The list of the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe can be changed only through an Act of Parliament. Only Parliament can do it. I cannot give any specific date about that.

Representation of SCs/ STs in Government Services

*407. **SHRI BANWARI LAL BAIRWA:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the representation of SC/ ST in services of Government and particularly in government bodies and undertaking is very low and much below the minimum required percentages in those classes in which direct recruitment is less than 67 per cent and where promotions are based on selection method; and

(b) whether Government are considering to modify the reservation orders about promotions within Class I services where selection is on a limited time basis to improve